

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: November 16, 2006

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:01 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 5:41 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Vernon Brown, Chair
Bob Cockrum
Susie Day
Ron Gibson
Monroe Gray, Jr.
Dane Mahern
William Oliver
Earl Salisbury

Absent Members

PROPOSAL NO. 597, 2006 - approves a transfer of \$40,000 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Park General Fund) to pay for needed supplies
"Do Pass" Vote: 8-0

PROPOSAL NO. 598, 2006 - approves an appropriation of \$37,428 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Non-Lapsing Federal Grants Fund) to appropriate three grants to allow forestry staff to attend education courses, for maintenance costs on approximately 46 acres of reforestation in Eagle Creek Park, and to assist Indy Parks and Recreation with native seed costs associated with a 56-acre prairie installation project at Eagle Creek Park
"Do Pass" Vote: 8-0

PROPOSAL NO. 599, 2006 - approves an appropriation of \$72,029 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Park General Fund) to fund after school activities at Charity Dye School 27, to fund the Stay in Bounds Character Discovery Challenge Program, and to support the establishment of a School Community Development Manager for two schools in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood
"Do Pass as Amended" Vote: 8-0

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, November 16, 2006. Chair Vernon Brown called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. with the following members present: Bob Cockrum, Susie Day, Ron Gibson, Monroe Gray, Jr., Dane Mahern, William "Duke" Oliver, and Earl Salisbury.

Presentation on Hours of Operation of Linear Trails within Indy Greenways and Parks System

Chair Brown stated that this presentation is a result of a letter circulating from the Indiana Bicycle Association regarding the hours of operation of the Monon Trail.

Keith Cheney, Administrator, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), stated that with anything DPR does, the number one concern is public safety. He said that DPR's director is allowed to set the hours of the parks, which are from dusk to dawn. Mr. Cheney stated that DPR believes these are the safest hours for users of the parks. During non-daylight hours there is very limited use, very little lighting, and limited patrols. John Mattingly, Captain of Indy Parks Rangers, stated that he totally agrees with Mr. Cheney adding that it is a safety issue and he truly supports the hours that are maintained.

Councillor Oliver asked if there are any volunteers deputized to ride the trails and how many there are. Mr. Mattingly stated that he has not known of any volunteers that ride the trails. Mr. Cheney stated that in the past there was a group of volunteers for maintenance only, and they would let the Parks Department know if there was a problem on any of the trails. Councillor Oliver asked if DPR has a relationship with the Central Indiana Bicycling Association (CIBA). Joseph Wynns, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, stated that DPR does have a relationship with CIBA. He stated that there is no issue of safety during the day. Safety at night is more of a law enforcement situation because of the kinds of confrontation a person may run into. Mr. Wynns stated that another issue is that DPR would be liable for harm coming to any volunteers.

Councillor Salisbury asked if the majority of the problems are at Eagle Creek. Mr. Wynns stated that it is more of a problem on the Monon Trail. Councillor Salisbury stated that there are people on the trail after dusk. Mr. Wynns stated when DPR approves the use of parks and trails; DPR has to guarantee citizen safety. He said that if something happens to a person, DPR is liable. He said that DPR cannot guarantee safety on those trails after dark. Chair Brown asked if DPR's policy is for the safety of the citizens. Mr. Wynns answered in the affirmative.

Councillor Gray asked if anyone has met with CIBA and explained the issues to them. Mr. Wynns answered in the negative, stating that he is putting together a meeting with CIBA to explain the department's standpoint.

PROPOSAL NO. 597, 2006 - approves a transfer of \$40,000 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Park General Fund) to pay for needed supplies

Mr. Wynns stated that these funds are not new, as they were already approved in the budget at the beginning of the year. He said that DPR is asking Council permission to move some funds from Characters 03 and 04 into Character 02 for supplies, such as grass seed, lumber, and recreation supplies.

Councillor Cockrum moved, seconded by Councillor Mahern, to send Proposal No. 597, 2006 to the full Council with a "Do Pass" recommendation. This motion carried by a vote of 8-0.

PROPOSAL NO. 598, 2006 - approves an appropriation of \$37,428 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Non-Lapsing Federal Grants Fund) to appropriate three grants to allow forestry staff to attend education courses, for maintenance costs on approximately 46 acres of reforestation in Eagle Creek Park, and to assist Indy Parks and Recreation with native seed costs associated with a 56-acre prairie installation project at Eagle Creek Park

Jason Gabehart, DPR Grants Manager, stated that there are three grants that are being appropriated. He said that the first grant comes from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) division of the Community and Urban Forestry program, and the grant is to be used to allow the forestry staff to gain legal certification so that they can represent the City in legal matters concerning trees. He stated that the second grant comes from the Fish and Wildlife Service for a reforestation project at Eagle Creek Park for maintenance. Mr. Gabehart stated that the third grant is also from Fish and Wildlife Service at Eagle Creek Park, which is a separate program used to pay for seeds for the Prairie Installation. Mr. Wynns added that the reason for the first grant is that DPR does so much litigation related to the right-of-ways, trees in right-of-ways, and land ownership where property stops. He said this training gives the staff a better feel on how to deal with those issues.

Councillor Cockrum moved, seconded by Councillor Mahern, to send Proposal No. 598, 2006 to the full Council with a "Do Pass" recommendation. This motion carried by a vote of 8-0.

PROPOSAL NO. 599, 2006 - approves an appropriation of \$72,029 in the 2006 Budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation (Park General Fund) to fund after school activities at Charity Dye School 27, to fund the Stay in Bounds Character Discovery Challenge Program, and to support the establishment of a School Community Development Manager for two schools in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood

Mr. Gabehart stated that there are three grants for this proposal that are being appropriated. He said that the first grant is from United Way. This grant will be used to support staffing, supplies, and transportation for Charity Dye School 27. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) grant will be used to support the Character Discovery Challenge Program, which basically teaches children character elements through interactive workshops. The funding will be used to pay staffing costs, contracting instructors, program equipment, and rewards. Mr. Gabehart stated that the Annie E. Casey Foundation grant is to support the establishment of a School Community Development Manager for two schools listed in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood, Hazel Hart Hendricks School 37 and James Russell Lowell School 51. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR is excited about the Annie E. Casey grant because the development manager will be focusing just on the Martindale-Brightwood area to develop resources to make sure after-school programs in that community stay.

Councillor Gibson applauded DPR for looking for grant funding for after-school programs, character development, and having a partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). He stated that with all three grants, the amount is well over \$100,000 dollars, but DPR is only appropriating a little over \$72,000 dollars. He asked when the additional funds will be appropriated. Jeff Seidenstein, Office of Finance and Management (OFM), stated that these funds are coming from the Park General Fund and not a Non-Lapsing Grant Fund. The appropriations will lapse at the end of the year. He said that this program will expand over two calendar years, so DPR is appropriating this year what they can spend and then will come back next year to appropriate what can be spent next year.

Councillor Gibson moved, seconded by Councillor Mahern, to make a technical amendment to changing the words "Non-Lapsing Federal Grants," to "Park General." The motion carried by a vote of 8-0.

Councillor Oliver asked with regards to the partnership with IPS, how many children are involved in those particular programs within the different schools, and do those schools have the capacity to accommodate other programs. Jennifer Voreis, Administrator, DPR, stated that DPR works with somewhere between 35-40 children per school in those particular after-school programs. She stated that DPR offers other after-school programs, and it varies widely. Ms. Voreis stated that the answer to Councillor Oliver's question is not as simple as it seems because there are a variety of different things DPR is doing. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR will provide a list of programs and partnerships they have with the schools.

Chair Brown stated that there is an initiative under way by some of the Councillors and President Gray to try and identify many programs to which children can be added. He said that most of the programs are running in those critical hours that children can get into trouble, and having accurate data will help in the future to identify the most successful programs.

Mr. Wynns stated that with the various facilities all over the City, it is shocking to hear that the youth of this City have nothing to do. He said that DPR puts out the Fun Guide every year and lists all of the programs and facilities, and it is disheartening to hear that. Mr. Wynns stated that one of the biggest barriers in providing youth services is transportation, and there has not been a way to manage that issue.

Councillor Mahern stated that the transportation issue is very real and he would like to see a discussion with the Parks Department and IndyGo to work together to come up with some alternatives to resurrecting both images.

Councillor Mahern moved, seconded by Councillor Oliver, to send Proposal No. 599, 2006 to the full Council with a "Do Pass as Amended" recommendation. This motion carried by a vote of 8-0.

Old Business

Coffin Golf Course Update:

Mr. Wynns stated that he received a letter from Mr. Thompson's attorney on September 26, 2006. In the letter, Mr. Thompson stated that they were withdrawing a letter dated September 25, 2006 indicating they were ready to proceed with the new agreement. He said the company was going to stick

with the old agreement until Mr. Thompson's other issues get worked out within his business. Mr. Wynns said that the current contract is in effect. Chair Brown asked if DPR has signed off on the project. Mr. Wynns answered in the affirmative, stating that DPR is on target with its part of the project. The funds have been reappropriated in the budget for DPR's portion of the clubhouse and they have been able to renegotiate the fees.

New Business

Councillor Gibson recognized Councillor Mahern's efforts volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and giving back to the community.

Mr. Wynns added that for a number of years, Perry Township has been trying to sell off a portion of Perry Park to a church for their use as a parking lot. He said that the board members voted not to sell that portion to the church. Mr. Wynns stated that DPR was very concerned that they were going to lose five acres of park land. He said that DPR is going to meet with the members of the board to re-establish another long-term lease to protect the investment DPR has in Perry Township.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vernon Brown, Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee

VB/law